

BOOK REVIEWS

Scărișoara. The Realm of Scărișoara

by Onac, B.P., Perșoiu, A., Racoviță, G., Tămaș, T., Viehmann, I.

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The new 87 page paperback book, *Scărișoara: The Realm of Scărișoara*, published by the Emil Racoviță Institute of Speology in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and written by Bogdan P. Onac, Aurel Perșoiu, Gheorghe Racoviță, Tudor Tămaș, and Iosif Viehmann provides a cogent textual and photographic review of the current state of scientifically important information on *Scărișoara* Ice Cave, and other caves in the Gârda Seacă Valley basin and environs. The book also provides a history of discovery and exploration of each caves, a summary of present fossils and cave biota, and glimpses into the cultural geography of the region. The book also contains a review of cave rules in Romania and a glossary of terms. The book is written in Romanian and English, so it is accessible to Romanian and international audiences.

The strength of the book is that it is a comprehensive review of several scientifically important caves in the *Scărișoara* region in the Apuseni Mountains. The state of knowledge about each cave is discussed including cave exploration, cave formation, speleothem development, and cave management. While each of topics is thoroughly discussed, special attention is given to the discussion of the importance of climate change studies in these caves, particularly *Scărișoara* Ice Cave. The field of karst science has gotten significant attention in the last several years from many scientists interested in climate change due to the unique records present in calcite and ice speleothems. The *Scărișoara* region of Romania holds one of the most important records in Europe due to the unique deposits present in the region. *Scărișoara* Ice Cave, in particular, with its massive ice block holding climate records of the last few thousand years and its calcite speleothems holding climate records of hundreds of thousands of years provides ample opportunity for scientific inquiry. Thus, while other caves are described in the book, specific attention is given to the unique characteristics of the *Scărișoara* Ice Cave, particularly the ice block and the ice stalagmites that hold distinct records of subtle seasonal climate change.

The book also provides a detailed and systematic description of each cave system discussed. Notable forms and features are highlighted and detailed maps of each cave are presented. Each cave contains unique features that make it noteworthy. However, as examined in this book, the caves provide a unique way of unifying and interpreting the landscape of the region. Anyone interested in the karst of Romania or of Europe will be interested in having this book as a visual and textual tour of key caves of the region. The book contains over 60 color photographs and several maps to provide the reader visual images to accompany the detailed textual descriptions of the region. The maps are excellent and the photographs are of not only of features in the caves, but also of some of the natural and human landscape in the region. The only negative aspect of this book is the photographs are not captioned, thus it is difficult to assess the exact location of features present in some of them. Nevertheless, this is a book that will be of interest to those interested in learning more about the karst landscape of Romania and the Apuseni Mountains.

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